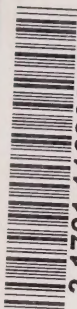


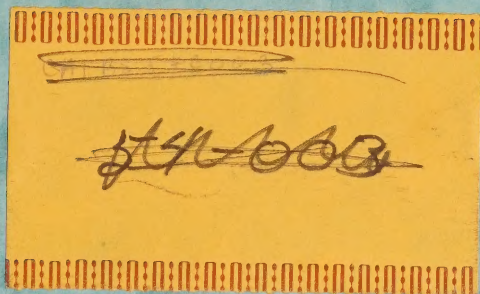
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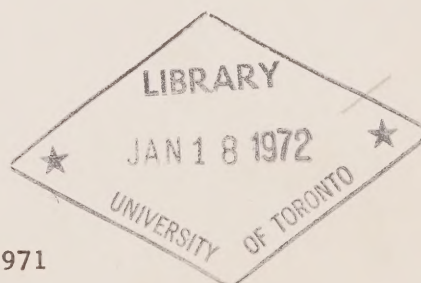
DEFINITIONS OF FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD IN POPULATION STATISTICS
(with special reference to the Canadian population statistics)

by

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DEFINITIONS OF FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD IN POPULATION STATISTICS (with special reference to the Canadian population statistics)

1. Introduction

In the field of demography, the study of the family is relatively new, the greatest progress to date having been made in the United States, notably in the work of Paul C. Glick. (Glick 1947, 1957, 1959). An early DBS Census Monograph, The Canadian Family, gave ample evidence of the fruitfulness of the demographic approach to the study of the family, by investigating aspects of the historical development, the size, composition and structure of Canadian families and households, using census and other relevant data. (Pelletier, 1938). And yet, although the Canadian census continued to compile voluminous data on households and families, no major work of this kind on the Canadian family has ever been undertaken since.

Over the years since Glick pioneered the demographic study of the family, there has been a growing awareness of the value of population statistics and demographic techniques in the study of family and household units. The use of such studies of families and households in serving the needs of empirical research, theory building, and policy making, has been increasingly stressed — at population conferences (IUSSP, 1963), in standard texts on demography (Spiegelman, 1955, 1968; Bogue, 1969), and in the work of sociologists and demographers interested in using population data for historical, national and cross-cultural research on the family, and in developing family theory. (Ogburn and Nimkoff, 1955; Davis, 1959; Goode, 1963, 1968; Collver, 1963; Levy, 1965a, 1965b; Burch, 1967, 1968, 1970).

2. The Demographic Study of the Family

The demographic study of families is the study of human groups, and it utilizes besides the traditional demographic data on births, marriages, divorces, deaths, etc., of individuals, the information on households and families collected by population censuses and surveys throughout the world. This approach is to be distinguished from the study of the family by demographers interested in fertility, which is based on information for individual women according to their number of children ever born. (See Section 5.1).

Population statistics for individuals are quite different from those for families and households, and this difference should be understood. As Donald Bogue points out:

"The distinction between a population category and a human group is a very important one. In the former, similarity of characteristics is the criterion for classification. In the latter, the criterion is a more or less enduring social, economic or psychological interaction or interdependency". (Bogue, 1969, 367).

Population data used in demographic research have traditionally taken the form of aggregations of individual cases. This has been so, in spite of the fact that most people exist in real life as members of household and family groups. Household and family data obtained from population censuses represent information for such groups of individuals. Furthermore, it is of some importance to note that the data for households, and hence for families, as obtained from

both 'de jure' and 'de facto' censuses, refer to groups of people sharing or occupying the same housing unit or dwelling at the time of enumeration, that is, to residential units. (Although of course, the requirements for being considered a member of a household, and hence a family, differ as between 'de jure' and 'de facto' censuses. (United Nations, 1959, 55-59, 70).

This paper attempts to summarize in a general way, some definitions of the household and family as used in population statistics, and for examples it will draw on definitions used in Canadian statistics.

3. Household and Family in Population Censuses

A United Nations document points out that the terms "household" and "family" as used in population censuses throughout the world often lack clarity and precision because

"The term 'family' is used in census and other publications in a variety of ways often in the sense of 'household', and, by the use of adjectives, given meanings which may be very far apart, overlap, or express the same idea". (United Nations, 1959, 75).

A footnote attached to this excerpt cites the following array of terms taken from recent census publications: 'conjugal family', 'biological family', 'joint family', 'sub-family', 'private family', 'complete family', 'completed family', 'residual family', 'normal family', 'ordinary family', 'census family', 'family in restricted sense', 'family in broader sense'.

This UN document, as well as some others, (United Nations, 1957, 1958), examine in detail the relationship between the household and family concepts, and also contain some information on how these concepts are used in different population censuses. It is readily apparent that the current concepts of household and family which are used in the various countries of the world, are the result of traditional census usage in each country, as well as of the particular problems to be solved in each country.

In a general way it can be said that the household is a basic census concept which serves as an important unit of enumeration, identifying as it does the housing unit occupied by one person or a group (usually a family) or group of persons, or the housekeeping arrangements of one person or a group (usually a family) or groups of persons within a dwelling, or both, depending on the specific details of the particular definition of household used. (United Nations, 1958, 11; 1959, 70; 1969a, 1). Note also that the distinction between private and collective (or institutional) households is an important feature of most censuses of population.

The following excerpt indicates the general relationship between the concepts of household and family as used in contemporary population censuses.

"The identification of households as a preliminary step to the enumeration greatly facilitates the

efficient collection of the data and control of its completeness. While the household is identified by the census enumerator, the family is determined at the data processing stage by combining the information for the individual members of the household". (United Nations, 1959, 74. See also Benjamin, 1963, 167)

The particular definition of the family used, then, will determine the way in which the information for the individual members of the household is combined or 'grouped'. Herein lies the importance of the definition of the family which is used in a population census. Also important is the fact that if sufficiently detailed information on the composition of households is obtained by a census, it is possible, at the data processing and tabulation stage, to obtain data according to more than one definition of household and family (IUSSP, 1963, 279). A concrete example is the compilation of information in the Canadian census since 1956 according to the two definitions, 'census family' and 'economic family', and the plan to compile and tabulate, in connection with the 1971 Census of Canada, additional information for 'mover' and 'migrant' families.

4. Definitions of Household and Family in the Canadian Census

The historical development of the concepts of the family as used in the Canadian census have been described in detail in a DBS Census Division Memorandum. (Gauthier, 1971). The following paragraphs summarize and explain the current Canadian census definitions of family and household.

4.1 The Household

As defined in the Canadian census, a household consists of a person, a family, or a group of persons occupying one dwelling. (Canada, 1971). It usually consists of a family group, with or without lodgers, employees, etc. However, it may consist of a group of unrelated persons, of two or more families sharing a dwelling, or of one person living alone. Every person is a member of some household and the number of households equals the number of occupied dwellings. There are 'private' and 'collective' households. The private household consists of one person, a family, or a small group of related or unrelated persons. A very useful feature of the Canadian statistics for private households is their presentation according to 'family type', that is data are compiled and tabulated for family and non-family households. Collective-type households include hotels, motels, hospitals, large lodging houses, (that is, lodging houses with ten or more lodgers not related to the head of the household), institutions of all types, military camps, lumber camps and other establishments of a similar nature.

4.2 The Census Family

The Canadian 'census family' definition which has been in use since the 1941 Census, defines a family as consisting of a husband and wife, with or without never married children, or a parent with one or more children who have never married, living together in the same dwelling. Adopted children and step-children are counted as own children, as are guardianship children

under 21 years of age. Once a child is married, he or she ceases to be considered a part of the parents' family for census purposes, even though living in the same household. Such married children, when living with husband or wife, and/or children, constitute a second family unit within the same household. All unmarried sons and daughters living at home, regardless of age, are considered, by definition, as members of families, although those over 25 are not classified and tabulated as children in the relevant census tables. Unmarried sons and daughters, 24 years of age and under who are living at home, are classified, for census purposes, and are tabulated as children in families. Family statistics obtained from such a definition, then, give information on a group of persons who are living together when enumerated, and they do not include children or parents who have died, or who are living permanently elsewhere.

It is of some interest to note that the UN recommends, for purposes of the analysis of household composition, a concept of the family which is identical to the Canadian census family concept: a married couple or (lone) parent with their never-married children in the same household. The UN refers to the latter as the 'conjugal family nucleus', which may consist of the following combinations: (a) a married couple without children; (b) a married couple with one or more never-married children, or (c) one parent (either father or mother) with one or more never-married children. (United Nations, 1969b, 20, 21)

It will also be noted that the Canadian 'census family' definition, with its emphasis on the marital and/or parent-child relationship, and the exclusion of 'other relatives' in the same household, corresponds more closely to the so-called 'nuclear' or 'conjugal' family concept (sometimes referred to as the 'natural' or biological' family), than does, for example, the definition of the family used in the United States census. The latter, since it refers to all members of a household related by blood, marriage or adoption, emphasizes more the economic (spending, consumption) aspects of the family unit, (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1963, XI) and is identical to the Canadian 'economic' family' definition.

4.3 The Economic Family

In connection with the 1956 and 1961 Censuses of Canada, families were defined, and data compiled, according to the additional definition of 'economic family' (See Canada, 1959, 1967). An 'economic family' is defined as two or more persons resident in the same household and related by blood, marriage, or adoption. (Canada, 1967, 5). Under the census family definition, the relationship must be that of a husband-wife, or a parent-unmarried child, but under the economic family definition, any relatives living together in the same household constitute a family unit.

The Canadian census undertook the tabulation of data for economic families for a number of reasons. The economic family concept coincides with the definition of the family used in the U.S. census and makes possible U.S. - Canadian comparisons. Furthermore, consumer, welfare and dependency studies require information on families considered as economic units. For example, using the census family concept, older relatives dependent on the family

income cannot be included as members of the family. However, such older persons count as family members according to the economic family definition. The usefulness of data compiled according to the latter definition is obvious.

4.4 The Mover Family and the Migrant Family

On the assumption that migration is not purely an individual phenomenon, but takes place within a family context, plans have been made to compile data for 'mover' and 'migrant' families, in connection with the 1971 Canadian census. In the definitions to be used, which are presented below, 'migrants' include all inter-municipal movers, that is, all intra-provincial (excluding intra-municipal) movers, inter-provincial movers and international movers; while 'movers' include all migrants and intra-municipal movers. (Canada, 1969). Further specifications in the definition regarding date of marriage guarantee that it is the family group that moves or migrates, and not just the head of the family. Hence:

A mover family is

a husband-wife family with the same date of first marriage of husband and wife, prior to June 1966 and both movers; or a one-parent family with the head's date of first marriage prior to June 1966 and a mover.

A migrant family is

a husband-wife family with the same date of first marriage of husband and wife, prior to June 1966 and both migrants; or a one-parent family with the head's date of first marriage prior to June 1966, and a migrant. (Canada, 1969)

Although the data for such mover and migrant families will be compiled and tabulated at the data-processing stage, the latter has been made possible only because of considerable forethought and pre-planning which involved decision making as regards the definitions to be used, and the inclusion of a new question (for the Canadian census) on the date of first marriage of the male population. (See Canada, 1969; Pryor, 1969)

5. Other Definitions of Family in Population Statistics

5.1 The Demographic Family

It is appropriate here to distinguish briefly between the family concepts discussed above, and the family as traditionally discussed by demographers interested in fertility, and sometimes called the 'demographic family'.

The family as traditionally discussed by demographers interested in fertility, does not refer to the 'residential unit'. It refers to the number of children ever born alive, that is, to the number of children produced by a woman who has ever been married, during her child-bearing life-time. As a rule, still-births, adopted or step-children are not counted in this family, but

all children born alive are counted, even those who have since died, or who have moved away from home. The demographic family, therefore, is based on retrospective data, and can include those who are not members of the residential unit. Using fertility data collected at the 1941 Census of Canada, that is, data on the number of children born alive to Canadian women, Dr. Enid Charles wrote a monograph which bears the title The Changing Size of the Family in Canada. (Charles, 1948) The author herself has pointed out that the frequent use of the term 'family size' may cause confusion: she intended it to replace the word fertility in the text to make for easier reading. (Charles, 1948, 6). One could argue, however that there was a certain logic to her use of the term 'family size' in the title of the monograph, since her interest was not merely in aspects and differentials of the fertility of Canadian women at a certain point in time, but just as much in trends in completed family size in Canada, that is, in the total number of children that Canadian women of varying origins and characteristics were likely to bear during their respective reproductive life-times. For similar reasons, the survey undertaken for the Royal Commission Population in 1946 in Great Britain, and designed to obtain information on live births is called the "Family Census" (Carr-Saunders et al., 1958, 22).

5.2 The Family in Historical Demography

Also of some interest is the manner in which the term 'family' is used in the field of historical demography. This field, which has undergone a rapid development in recent years in both its theoretical and empirical aspects, largely through the efforts of Louis Henry of France, uses as a basic method the reconstitution of families from early parish registers and records, and other similar historical documents. The family is 'reconstituted' in terms of such information as

- the dates of marriage of the couple,
- the dates of birth of the first and successive children (which yields therefore, information on the intervals between births),
- the dates of death of one or both partners, (which yields, therefore, information on duration of marriage),
- the date(s) of re-marriage of one of the partners,
- the dates of marriage of the children, etc.

This kind of information, obtained from 'reconstituted' families which are then sampled according to proven systematic methods can be used to yield indices of fertility, mortality, etc., which reveal the demographic picture of a particular historical period, or of a particular population group in history, or even aspects of the course of human fertility in general. (Henripin, 1954; Henry, 1956, 1967; Pressat, 1961; Wrigley, 1966).

In a chapter on "Family Reconstitution", E.A. Wrigley (1966, 96), compares this method with the aggregative method - that is the method of the simple counting of demographic 'events' such as births, baptisms, marriages, burials, etc., from parish registers. He concludes that while the aggregative method yields good results in the matter of showing trends, as for example the natural increase or decrease of a population, it is only data from reconstituted families which can show whether the change was due to a rise in the

average age at marriage, or in the average interval between births, etc.

"The great strength of the family reconstitution method lies in its ability to penetrate more effectively into the demography of a parish than aggregative methods. For example, it is possible to gain a clear idea of trends in total population by aggregative methods, but often difficult to discover what changes in fertility and mortality produced the trends in question". (Wrigley, 1966, 97).

An outstanding example of a study of this kind, is the one by Jacques Henripin, for the French-Canadian population, in his La population canadienne, au début du dix-huitième siècle. (Henripin, 1954). Using the family genealogies of the famous Dictionnaire généalogique, assembled by Mgr. Tanguay, Henripin selected a representative sample from the French Canadian families represented in this dictionary, and on the basis of the data for the families (that is, households) formed between 1700 and 1730 he was able to reconstruct the demographic picture of the French Canadian population, its nuptiality, fertility, and infant mortality, for the early part of the eighteenth century.

5.3 The Family Derived from Longitudinal Data Obtained by Means of Record Linkage

Basically the same concept of the family as the one used in historical demography is contained in a study of fertility based on individual vital records which have been 'grouped' to give information for families. (Newcombe and Smith, 1970). According to the authors, vital records when linked by families, yield (more efficiently than other sources of data such as census enumerations and population surveys) information on the time and duration of marriage, the number and spacing of children born (including those who have died and have left the family group) and permit the distinction between twins and pairs of siblings born within less than a year of each other. To illustrate the value — for fertility and family growth studies — of vital records linked to form families, the authors use information for the province of British Columbia, where vital records have been linked into family groups for a period from 1946 to 1963. Their study is designed to examine the 'procreative history' of the first two years following marriage, of marriages contracted in 1961 as compared with those contracted ten years earlier, in 1951.

Record linkage of census records, to create family units, has been reported in the article "Family Studies in the Eastern Health District, (1): Family Structure and its Changing Pattern" (Taback, 1954).

"Since 1922, the Eastern Health District has served as an area for the investigation of the relative risks of disease in selected population elements. One of the prerequisites of this study has been the careful description of the social structure of the population. This has been done by periodic censuses. A unique

phase of these enumerations has been the operation of matching records from successive censuses when they are related to the same individual or family unit. This process allows one to obtain a sequence of observations on an individual or group of individuals with respect to some specified attribute". (Taback, 1954, 343)

On the basis of these linked census records, Taback presents a study of the changing structure of the family, by investigating changes over time, in the ages of household heads, the size and density of households, the occupational status of the household heads, and the composition of households. The study is detailed and of considerable interest, because of the information on how the census records were matched, and because of the precision with which the study was designed and carried out, and the conclusions presented.

6. Conclusion

When population statistics are examined as sources of data for the demographic study of families, the fact is revealed that here too, as in the many sociological and anthropological studies of the family, there are numerous and varying definitions of household and family. It is not surprising, therefore, that UN and other reports on population census methods recommend a greater standardization and precision of the definitions of 'household' and 'family' in order to make more usable and useful the household and family data collected by national population censuses.

Some definitions for 'reconstituted' families, that is family groupings re-created from historical and contemporary (vital and census) records, are also included to illustrate other ways in which data for 'families', as in contrast with those for individuals, can be used in demographic studies.

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